

WASHINGTON, D.C. - *All seven members of the Oregon Congressional Delegation today released the following joint statement after signing a bipartisan letter to Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, expressing grave concerns regarding the proposed changes to National Guard pay and retirement identified in the 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC)*
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"The proposal to change National Guard drill pay and retirement seems untenable. At a time when the Active Component is experiencing a reduction in forces, we question any plan likely to jeopardize National Guard recruitment and retention. We are particularly concerned with the detrimental effect on the retention of senior officers and noncommissioned officers should the QRMC recommendations be adopted. The Oregon National Guard deserves the best we have to offer for their service, and we ask for any further consideration of these proposals to proceed with the greatest caution."

Below please find the letter from the Oregon Congressional Delegation to Secretary Panetta.

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July 24, 2012

Honorable Leon E. Panetta

US Department of Defense

1400 Defense Pentagon

Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Panetta:

We are writing you today to express our grave concerns regarding the proposed changes to National Guard pay and retirement identified in the 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC).

While we appreciate the desire to streamline the authority process for calling National Guard personnel to duty, the proposal to reduce National Guard drill pay by 50 percent and to compensate by providing an "end of year incentive payment" equal to 50 percent of annual drill pay seems untenable. Other proposals in the QRMC need to be defined. Vague QRMC statements such as "In particular, consider compensating reservists with a day's pay for a day's work, including entitlements" need be clarified before there can be any consideration of the proposed changes.

The lack of specificity with regard to retirement is a cause of concern with the QRMC recommendations. Although the stated goal is to provide continuity between the Active Component and Reserve Component retirement plans, we fail to see such continuity. Active component retirement is payable on completion of 20 years of qualifying service, while the recommended changes to Reserve retirement require the service member to wait until the anniversary of their 30th year of service or age 60. Yet the effect of reducing the drill pay rate by 50 percent and subsequently reducing the retirement points awarded for drills is not addressed.

At a time when the Active Component is experiencing a Reduction in Forces, we question any plan likely to jeopardize National Guard recruiting and retention. We are particularly concerned with the detrimental effect on the retention of Senior Officers and NCOs should these recommendations be adopted.

We are proud of the sacrifices made by the members of the Oregon National Guard. They work hard to maintain a high level of readiness and have regularly been called up to serve in combat zones over the past 10 years. They deserve the best we have to offer for their service. What

has been placed on the table by the QRMC is simply unacceptable.

We ask you to carefully consider the potential negative impact of these recommendations on the recruiting, retention and morale of our citizen soldiers at a time when our country depends on them more than ever for our national security. Thank you for your continued service to our country.

Sincerely,

KURT SCHRADER

Member of Congress

PETER DeFAZIO

Member of Congress

RON WYDEN

U.S. Senator

EARL BLUMENAUER

Member of Congress

SUZANNE BONAMICI

Member of Congress